

## STANDARDS AND INDICATORS OF QUALITY\*

### Standards and Indicators of Quality For the Evaluation of Local Education Programs For Homeless Children and Youth (McKinney-Vento Programs)

**\*The following information is not a part of the U.S. Department of Education's Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) requirements. It is neither required nor endorsed by the Department. It is offered as part of the technical assistance and support provided to States and LEAs by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at SERVE**

Program evaluation is a critical element of program improvement. Although many good programs exist, what is lacking is an emphasis on using data to see if we are making a difference. It is vital to construct tools to ensure that we make continuous progress in serving homeless children and youth.

An appropriate evaluation plan compares the program of interest to a set of standards and indicators characteristic of high quality programs for homeless children and youth. Standards express general characteristics of high quality programs while indicators are subunits of the standards and describe more specific aspects of the programs.

During the summer 2001, NCHE convened a work group of State coordinators, local coordinators, representatives of national organizations, program evaluation specialists, and U.S. Department of Education staff. The group developed the following quality outcome standards and indicators for McKinney-Vento programs. SERVE Evaluation Program staff led the group through a process to develop indicators based on discussions of effective programs and practices that result in increased school enrollment, attendance, and achievement of homeless children and youth.

Reflecting the McKinney-Vento statute, the following five standards and their associated indicators were drafted to facilitate local program personnel to evaluate their programs with the results leading to effective programmatic decisions.

**Standard 1. *Within one full day of an attempt to enroll in a school, homeless children and youth will be in attendance.***

Rationale: Homeless children and youth are often denied enrollment or are enrolled but not allowed to attend school until certain requirements are met. Research shows that gaps in attendance are linked to poor academic performance; children cannot learn if they are not in school.

McKinney-Vento: The school selected in accordance with this paragraph shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, or other documentation. (See Sec. 722(g)(3)(C)(i) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

**Standard 2. *Homeless pre-k to 12 children and youth will have stability in school.***

- 2.1. Attendance rates will be at or above the relevant district average.**
- 2.2. Students will remain in the school of origin for the period of homelessness or, if permanently housed, for the remainder of the school year, unless parents or unaccompanied youth requested transfer to another school.**

Rationale: School stability and continuity in school enrollment are associated with school success including achievement, promotion, and graduation. Research studies have indicated that a child may lose 4-6 months of academic progress with each move to a new school. The importance of a child attending one school and of attending consistently (in one school or in several schools without gaps during a transition if the child must change schools) cannot be underestimated.

McKinney-Vento: The local education agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.  
(See Sec. 722(g)(3)(A)(i)(I) and (II) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

**Standard 3. *Homeless children and youth will receive specialized services when eligible.***

- 3.1. Eligible homeless preschool children can participate in public preschool (Head Start, Even Start, State pre-K, preschool programs for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, meals, programs for children with limited English proficiency, and Title I pre-school programs).**
- 3.2. Eligible homeless children and youth can receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, educational and related aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency.**
- 3.3. Homeless children and youth will receive appropriate services, based on assessment of individual needs, through a combination of resources, including, but not limited to Title I, McKinney-Vento, and other federally funded programs.**

Rationale: Consistent with the intent of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the provision of services to the neediest of students is essential to closing the academic achievement gap between students most at risk of failure and those least at risk. Homeless students frequently move from school to school before eligibility for specialized programs can be determined or before they can rise high enough on waiting lists to be admitted to programs. Programs must find ways to accommodate their eligibility policies and procedures to address the needs of highly mobile students.

McKinney-Vento: Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including the following: transportation services; educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I of the ESEA or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational and technical education; programs for gifted and talented students; school nutrition programs. (See Sec. 722(g)(4) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

**Standard 4. Parents or persons acting as parents of homeless children and youth will participate meaningfully in their children's education.**

- 4.1. Parents or persons acting as parents will have a face-to-face conference with the teacher, guidance counselor, or social worker within 30 days of enrollment.**
- 4.2. Parents or persons acting as parents will be provided with individual student reports informing them of their child's specific academic needs and achievement on academic assessments aligned with state academic achievement standards.**
- 4.3. Parents or persons acting as parents will report monitoring or facilitating homework assignments.**
- 4.4. Parents or persons acting as parents will share reading time with their children (i.e., parent reads to child or listens to child read).**
- 4.5. Parents who would like parent skills training will attend available programs.**
- 4.6. Parents or guardians will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.**
- 4.7. Unaccompanied youth will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.**

Rationale: Research shows that one of the most critical indicators of academic success is the involvement of parents in their children's education. In families experiencing homelessness, parents often face many challenges to their participation in their children's education. School districts need to take extra steps to help parents in homeless families become involved in the education of their children.

McKinney-Vento: Each local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth ... shall ensure that the parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. (See Sec. 722(g)(6)(A)(iv) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Title I, Part A regarding Standard 4.2: A state assessment system shall produce individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports, consistent with clause (iii) that allows parents, teachers, and principals to understand and address the specific academic needs of students, and include information regarding achievement on academic assessments aligned with State academic achievement standards, and that are provided to parents, teachers, and principals, as soon as is practicably possible after the assessment is given, in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. (See Sec. 1111(b)(3)(C)(xii) of the ESEA).

**Standard 5. Homeless children and youth in grades 3-12 will meet their states' academic standards.**

- 5.1. Performance on standards-based assessments in reading and math will be within or above the proficient range or will show a one-for-one gain.**
- 5.2. Rates of promotion to the next grade level will be at or above the district average.**
- 5.3. Rates of high school graduation or equivalent will be at or above the district average.**

Rationale: Consistent with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, homeless children and youth must be given the opportunity to achieve to the same high standards as all other children. Each of the preceding standards helps to provide the support a homeless child or youth needs to succeed academically.

McKinney-Vento: Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. (See Sec. 721(4) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

